Government Supplied Extremist Group's Guns

A New York prosecutor said yesterday that eight rifles seized recently from members of the Revolutionary Action Movement in Queens were supplied through the Defense Department's civilian marksmanship program.

Sixteen members of the Movement, a secret extremist Negro group, were arrested and accused of plotting to assassinate Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP, and Whitney Young Jr., director of the National Urban League. Two of the 16 were indicted last month for conspiracy to commit murder and the other 14 for a variety of charges including conspiracy to advocate anarchy.

Frederick J. Ludwig, acting district attorney for Queens, said the eight guns had been obtained through the Jamaica Rifle and Pistol Club, which had been approved by the National Rifle Association for participation in the program. In all, more than 30 weapons were confiscated.

Ludwig also said that eight guns supplied by the Federal Government were seized in Queens last year from the Minutemen, a right-wing paramilitary organization.

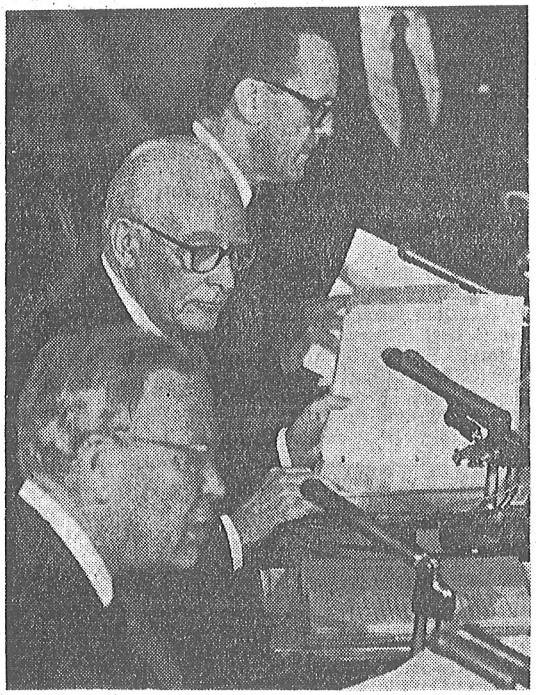
The easy availability of surplus military weapons and ammunition to gun clubs was discussed by Ludwig when he testified before the Senate Juvenile Delinquency Subcommittee for an Administration bill to control the interstate shipment of guns.

He said that if the Federal Government can't pass effective gun control legislation the least it can do is to stop supplying dangerous groups with weapons and ammunition.

Internal Revenue Commissioner Sheldon S. Cohen, whose office administers Federal gun laws, said that states have been unable to enforce their own firearm laws because of the ease with which guns can be purchased across state lines.

Subcommittee chairman Thomas J. Dodd (D-Conn.) opened the hearing by declaring that legislation would not stop crime in the streets but would severely limit the availability of guns to persons who should not have them.

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) predicted that gun control legislation will pass. He said, "There is a growing and resounding recognition by the public that the public's interest demands an end to the wild and unfettered flow of arms around the Nation."



FIREARMS HEARING—Sen. Thomas Dodd, left center, chairs the hearing on the mail-order firearms law. From top, Senators Philip Hart, Dodd, and Roman Hruska.

Photos by Wally McNamee—The Washington Post

GUN LAW EXHIBIT—Sen. Edward Kennedy looks at a page from a publication advertising, among other guns, a "legal" 30-shot semi-automatic weapon for $99.95. The exhibit was featured at the Judiciary Subcommittee hearing on mail-order arms.